



Housing Plan Implementation Committee

Date: January 17, 2020

Time: 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM

Location: Town Hall Annex, Second Floor Conference Room

Minutes

Present: Lourie August, Pam Hallett, Karen Kelleher, Jonathan Nyberg, Jenny Raitt, Patricia Worden, Erin Zwirko.

The Committee met to discuss submitting warrant articles for a municipal affordable housing trust fund and a real estate transfer fee.

The Committee began by discussing the real estate transfer fee. Pam had drafted a resolution and submitted it to Town Counsel for review. Jenny noted that a home rule petition would be necessary to adopt this in Arlington, so Town Meeting would only be voting on a resolution to develop the necessary bylaw.

Karen indicated that she is in favor of a real estate transfer fee, in part because it would be a dedicated funding source for a municipal affordable housing trust fund. She also noted that there need to be a community conversation about this concept.

Patricia indicated that she is also in favor, but that the fee should not be assessed to the buyer. She did not think the fee should be assessed on homes priced lower than the Arlington median. She also indicated that there should be an enhanced fee on resales to addressing flipping.

Jonathan wondered about the reality of how the fee would be assessed. He also noted that if the fee is assessed to the seller, it could impact those whose savings is in their home's equity. Pam thought that the seller would just incorporate the fee into the listing price, and in that way it would actually be on the buyer. Patricia noted that the average seller has appreciated value in their home, so the impact would not be as great.

Lourie indicated that she would be in favor of the fee, but is concerned about the details.

The Committee discussed how a real estate transfer fee would impact the market, and whether there would be certain segments of the market that would be hit harder. The Committee discussed that the devil is in the details. Jonathan thought that the fee should be assessed on all transactions. Karen suggested that the group should look at the resulting

revenue at a variety of price points such as transactions above the state median, the Arlington median, and over one million dollars.

Patricia stated that she was in favor of the fee, but depending on the details, she might rescind support.

Erin indicated that she would circulate the warrant article language and that she would pull the sales information and circulate to the group.

The Committee then discussed the municipal affordable housing trust fund. Erin provided a draft of the warrant article and motion language. Erin noted that the beauty of a trust fund is that it can act quickly outside of the Town Meeting schedule. Erin also noted that the trustees of the trust fund would be asked to create an action plan that identifies the priorities on which the trustees would act based on the powers that the bylaw gives them.

Karen asked about the size of the board. Erin indicated that she went with 7 members because it seemed like a manageable size. Erin did not want to add specific representation from other boards and commissions because it might overcommit volunteers in the community. Karen made a suggestion to add experience in public housing to the list of experiences. Patricia recommended a wording to change from “shall” to “may bring to the board”, so that it was not too stringent.

Patricia indicated that she is not interested in having the trust fund monies to go to 40B projects. The Committee discussed the implications of calling it out in the bylaw, whereas it might be satisfactory for the action plan to include a statement like that if the trustees felt strongly against funding 40B projects or even large developers. The Committee thought that this point may be part of the conversation with the Select Board when the Board reviews the article in the lead up to Town Meeting.

Patricia also indicated that she would like to see language about Select Board approval of sales, transfers, etc. The Committee members thought that it would be difficult to coordinate Select Board approval, but also noted that a Select Board member is one of the trustees and potentially more Select Board members could be trustees. The Committee agreed to think about where Select Board approval might be important.

Patricia made a motion to require Select Board approval on the sale, lease, transfers, etc, of assets. There was no second, as the other Committee members did not think it would be appropriate to vote at this stage. The Committee tabled the discussion for a future meeting.

On the minutes from November 13, 2019, Lourie and Patricia offered amendments. Lourie moved to accept the minutes from November 13th as revised. Jonathan seconded the motion. The vote was in favor of accepting the minutes as revised, with Karen abstaining.

The Committee then decided to meet regularly on the first Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 AM.